

Ornithological Literature

Edited by Sara R. Morris

WILDLIFE OF THE GALAPAGOS. By Julian Fitter, Daniel Fitter, and David Hosking. Line illustrations by Martin B. Withers. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, New Jersey. 2000: 254 pp., numerous color photographs and line drawings. \$19.95 (paperback).—The *Wildlife of the Galapagos* is somewhat of a misnomer for this pocket reference and field guide. This small tome includes identification and natural history information on the birds, reptiles, aquatic mammals, land mammals, invertebrates, and plants. An introductory section provides a key to species status, which includes information about whether a species or subspecies is endemic, native, or introduced, and the residency status of a species ranging from resident to migrant to occasionally observed. Numerous photographs illustrate the species and habitats of the islands. For the common species in the Galapagos, the authors include a list of locations where the species is best viewed.

For the distinctive species of the islands, the authors include additional information that may be of interest. For example, in the section on the Blue-footed Booby (*Sula nebouxi*), the authors include a description of the elaborate mating ritual of the species. When covering the Galapagos finches, the authors include a description of Darwin's voyage, a discussion of the importance of these species in the theory of evolution, and as an example of adaptive radiation, a tree showing the different lines of evolution within the group. Unlike most other species, the finch descriptions are accompanied by range maps for each species. The section on the Galapagos Tortoise (*Geochelone elephantopus*) is particularly well done. In addition to providing substantial details about the life history of the tortoises, there is considerable information about each of the subspecies, including the island or caldera where each is found, the shape of the carapace (including photographs and diagrams), and the population size and conservation concerns. Another example of how this is much more than a field guide is found in

the narrative about the Galapagos Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas agassisi*), where the authors include information on temperature-dependent sex determination in this species.

Following the species accounts, the authors cover the basic geology and volcanology, the history, ocean currents and climate, and more on the conservation of the islands. The geology section includes a discussion of the Galapagos hot spot, plate movements, and descriptions and photographs of a number of geological features. The history is brief, but provides a context for the human habitation of the islands. Many visitors will find the section on ocean currents to be of particular interest in explaining the unexpected cold temperature of equatorial waters.

One of the most useful portions of the book for visitors to the islands is a section on visitors' sites. For each of the commonly visited landings among the islands, there is a map that includes the trails, possible swimming areas, and indicates if there is a wet landing; a list of the species of plants and animals that are likely to be encountered; and a description of the background of the site. The lack of a key to the symbols is a little difficult, particularly for those not already familiar with the areas, but nonetheless, the inclusion of this resource is excellent.

Additional sections provide an extensive introduction to the islands for visitors to this unique area. Following the introduction is a map of the islands and a list of all the islands that includes their Spanish name, English name, and the derivation of both names, if known. The national park rules are enumerated, with additional reasons or explanations of many of the rules. An additional section on field photography includes information about equipment, covering such topics as camera choices (including a comparison of SLR and digital equipment), lens choices, film, and accessories, and photographic techniques, including lighting, exposure, depth of field, shutter speed, composition, and a code of conduct. A one-page conservation plea from the

director of the Galapagos National Park and the director of the Charles Darwin Research Station provides visitors with a mechanism to contribute to the preservation of the islands. A bibliography of additional references and a glossary of terms will greatly help the more enthusiastic visitor.

Because of its size, this guide is not as comprehensive as individual taxon specific guides. There are a number of minor changes that could make the volume more useful. For example, in the birds section, many of the identifying features which are described in the text are not shown in the accompanying photographs. Although there often is a list of locations where particular species can be viewed, the lack of range maps will be frustrating to the more serious natural history enthusiast. Anyone familiar with the taxonomic arrangement of birds will find the organization of the birds as seabirds, coastal birds, and landbirds to be somewhat frustrating.

Although not as comprehensive as individual guides for the flora, fauna, or geology of the islands, this field guide should be strongly considered by anyone looking for a single broad field guide reference during a trip to the Galapagos Islands. I showed this book to several students I took to the Galapagos, and they all wished that it had been available for their trip. Although it is basic in many areas, the *Wildlife of the Galapagos* provides a nice introduction to the islands and should be strongly considered by anyone looking for a single reference for an initiation to the islands or to keep their luggage lighter for their other equipment.—SARA R. MORRIS.

THE BIRDS OF ECUADOR, VOLUME I: STATUS, DISTRIBUTION, AND TAXONOMY. By Robert S. Ridgely and Paul J. Greenfield. Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, New York. 2001: 848 pp. \$60 (paperback), and BIRDS OF ECUADOR, VOLUME II: FIELD GUIDE. By Robert S. Ridgely and Paul J. Greenfield. Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, New York. 2001: 740 pp., 96 color plates, numerous black and white maps. \$50 (paperback).—The two-volume *Birds of Ecuador* set is a long-awaited addition to the guides available for birders in South America. In recognition

of the scope and volume of this work, the authors chose to divide the work into two volumes, one which can serve as a reference that is not taken into the field and a second designed as the field guide.

As its name suggests, *Volume I* is an extensive volume that covers the status, distribution, and taxonomy of Ecuadorian birds. The introductory material begins with an extensive "Plan of the Book," which includes information on the layout of the two volumes and details the authors' choices in taxonomy, names, area covered in the volume, abundance designation, species accounts, and references. This section also includes a list of species that are considered hypothetical, which the authors describe as lacking hard evidence of their occurrence in Ecuador, and a list of recent species, which covers the species that have been documented in Ecuador during the last few decades. A map of Ecuador is followed by a description of the geographic regions, the climate, and the major habitat types. The section, "Bird Migration in Ecuador," covers boreal (Nearctic-Neotropical), austral, and intratropical migrants as well as pelagic visitors, birds that disperse from Peru, and wanderers. "Ecuadorian Ornithology" includes information about the ornithological activity in Ecuador since the 1920s, when the last review was published, and is followed by "A Gazetteer" that provides an introduction to the regularly mentioned localities that provide much of the distribution data in the text. "Endemic Bird Areas in Ecuador" describes nine areas that are endemic centers and provides a list of the endemic species to those areas. A section on conservation covers many of the country's conservation concerns, including "Land Protection," "Conservation Status of At-Risk Bird Species," and a list of conservation considerations, which provides some context for the conservation problems that ends in what the authors describe as a call to arms.

Individual species accounts are arranged by order and family. Prior to the species accounts within a family, there is a brief introduction to the family that includes the number of genera and species found in Ecuador, information about the worldwide distribution of the family, and may include other information parti-